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Peace I leave with you: my peace give I unto you. John 14-27

The friends and advocates of what may fairly be described as a policy of "peace at any price." The people that is to say who regard war as being in itself rather a worse evil than any state of things which it may be supposed thereby to remedy, by warlike means; are much given to making accusation against the church that it is in the habit of neglecting its duties to perform its duties in this case. They assume that the church could, if it would, stop all wars, at least in Christian lands, and compel the disarmament of Christian nations; and they think that as professed followers of the teaching and example of Christ, the plain duty of Christian people, falls nothing short of this purpose and resolve.

That the Christian Church in many ways fails lamentably to reach the level of its opportunity to do good in the world, and fails lamentably to exert the spiritual influence it might be exerted to

world, must be ~~only~~ evident to all impartial minds.
But it is foolish to demand of this institution what
it has no power to give, and what it has no
business to try to secure, ~~if established~~ at present, by the means
so often recommended to its use.

~~They who view themselves patriotically called~~
The champions of the cause of universal peace
~~to be the friends of International arbitration~~ are quite
often widely mistaken on both points of which is
apt to be, with them, a favorite assumption. One
of them, for example, said recently that if only ten per
cent of the ministers of this country had preached
against our last war with Spain, they would
have made that war impossible.
There cannot be much doubt however
~~None for myself I have no doubt~~ that
~~to a small~~ a large proportion of the church, both
in the pulpits and in the pews of the land, looked upon
that war with much distaste, or even abhorrence; and war
~~was utterly distasteful and abhorred~~, and
confined reasonably sure
that at least ten per cent of the ministers, of all
denominations, did preach against it with as
much earnestness and vehemence as they were
capable of expressing on any subject whatever.
Of late years newspaper reports of pulpit

utterances have been a very inadequate indication of the drift of this form of popular teaching: for while a sermon that has in it anything picturesquely extravagant and absurd is quite sure to be spread before the public at large, with the ordinary course of moral and religious instruction in the church the press has little more to do than with the routine work of our colleges and schools.

It is certain ~~I am quite sure~~ that a vast deal of Christian sentiment was opposed to our last war, and is opposed to every war; so long ~~at least~~ as there remains any possibility that it can be avoided. But though the whole power and influence of the church were solidly exerted ~~to this end~~ in this direction, I do not know, as the world to-day stands, it could be argued that this would put an end ~~to war and strife~~ to the strife of arms. Human nature being what it is, one might as well dream of getting together a congress that should prevent further outbreaks of that dread volcano Etna in eruption, as of making sure that the trade of the soldier

shall come to an immediate end. The power of race antagonism and hatred, if there were nothing else to reckon with, is sure to develop here and there into open conflict. Add to this the clash of selfish interests and ambitions that must needs arise, and the misunderstandings that frequently occur between nations, as between individuals; consider that man in his present stage of development is an emotional rather than a rational being: and it must be owned that the prospect of universal peace, within any period that we can now foresee, is not brilliant.

Christendom, face to face with Mohammedan fanaticism, to say nothing of that so-called "yellow peril" which begins to be a real spectre of dread, simply cannot disarm; any more than Rome could when disarmed her legions with Northern Barbarians thundering at her gates; and it is very likely that this engine of war, which has to be retained for our outside protection, will here and there be employed for the settlement of disputes within our own family of nations.

what christian sentiment can now do, is to delay and hold off, and make more difficult the schemes of that reckless portion of mankind which would be glad to fly to arms on any trivial pretext. And in this the Church not only should have, but may confidently count upon the aid of all the wiser part of the military profession itself.

The notion that everybody belonging to the army and navy in these days is "spoiling for a fight", and eager to fan any coal of national disagreement into open flame, is ludicrously unjust. There are wise men and foolish men, in military as in civil life; but proper sense in these days of dread war, both for what it is in itself, and for what follows in its train; and certainly no man has better cause to dread it than he whose first duty it is to expose himself to all the risks and hardships it imposes.

We how come so much more than the past has been to the great dream of universal peace that war is only in some sense a last resort; and the public mind must be

very hot indeed, to set on fire the inflammable forces which many interests unite to dampen and quench, But the lesson of the past is that no human skill, or enterprise or forethought, can yet entirely avail to make the occasional combustion of these explosive materials in human life impossible; And when men say that this is what the Church should do, what it could do if it were in any wise faithful to its trust, they are talking a kind of nonsense which only makes it harder for religious influences to accomplish that which does lie within their power,

It is no hopeful way to strengthen the hands of an institution, which is laboring with such zeal and intelligence as it possesses for the advancement of the Kingdom of heaven, to spread abroad the accusation that in such a matter as that of preserving the workers' peace it is entirely false and recreant to its trust,

But suppose the Church could do what a few Socialists so frequently demand of it, is that what the example and precept of

behind reguin? ~~of it~~! So was, in the light of his teaching, that greatest of evils which ends to be suppressed at any cost! What is it that he demands of his followers, and what is the nature of that peace which, going out of the world, he bequeathed to his disciples!

It is easy, if to make out a case from his sayings ~~to~~ ~~make out a case~~ in favor of entire non-resistance it will; and if we applied those sayings, as some people think we are bound to do, we should abolish, not only the soldier, but the policeman and all our courts of law. The theory which he is sometimes supposed to recommend to mankind is that, by allowing what is bad and cruel and wrong to go unchecked and unopposed, ~~that~~ This unjust and inhumane spirit will be made ~~may be overcome, most quickly~~, ashamed of itself, and will be led to repent of its evil ways.

But surely one may point out that, if this was his theory, he more than once failed to live up to it himself. His action in driving the money changers from the Temple certainly was not dictated by any belief that the policy of letting

evil entirely alone was the true policy for providing an effectual remedy and cure. And since words may often express the mildest spirit, as well as blows, what shall we say of that denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, which more than rang full with biting emphasis from the lips of Christ!

If one is to carry out consistently the idea of non resistance, ought we not to abstain from such invective, as well as from the use of carnal weapons, in the form of words he seems to be in? In fact, I have heard the character of Jesus criticised from this record, in both these instances; the advocate of peace assuming that in forcibly ejecting from one of the courts of the temple those who had transformed it into a den of thieves, and in applying to the Pharisees such hard epithets as that of "whited sepulchres" and "generation of vipers" he departed the high ideal that he, himself, had set before men in his preaching.

But that theory of reforming wholesale is figurish and wolfish in mankind by indulging its carnal propensities to the top of their bent, is

I am persuaded, something which short-sighted
idealists have read into the words of Christ and which
will not be found there by any just and wise inter-
pretation. The sayings in the Sermon on the Mount &
do not really imply the presence in his mind of any such
foolish and impossible dream.

One of the fundamental misconceptions of his ~~words~~ teaching
which men of this age are quite as likely to stumble
into as any who have gone before us, comes from
the assumption that he was always consciously dealing
with great world-problems, and deliberately legislating
for the benefit of mankind. That is not true.
He had a world-wide purpose, but he left that almost
entirely to take care of itself; while he concentrated his
his thought and care upon this little group of disciples
~~upon whom he depended~~ which was to be the link between him
and future ages.

All that he said needs to be interpreted either as
being addressed first of all to them, or as bearing upon
what was with him the one all-absorbing problem of
fitting them for the work he was to commit into their
hands. If he was making plans for the regulation of
social and national affairs through distant periods

of time in accordance with a definite code of laws that he proposed to establish in the earth. It is simply inconceivable that he should have been so careless about the preservation of his words, and should have made so little provision for an accurate record, in literary form, of those things which he wished men to do.

But when one sees that he was stamping everything upon the impression he could produce in the living minds of his followers, the plan of his ministry becomes in every way consistent and intelligible.

Suppose one is engaged in producing a new variety of fruit, which in hopes will be something better, in that kind, than ~~has ever been before known~~ has been known before. He does not bother his head with planning out in advance all the changes likely to occur when that fruit is introduced to the markets of the world. His business is to bring that seedling to perfection. If, when its fruit is ripened, it is better than men have before tasted, it will spread, and spread, till at last it is rooted in every soil. Now the clear insight of Christ went straight to the heart and centre of the whole

problem of the world's life, that of the quality of human nature itself. He saw that what was needed was not so much a new set of regulations for the guidance of human action, but a new kind of humanity; and that is what he proposed to furnish. St Paul said "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature" and therein he expressed the real secret of his motive ~~purpose~~ drive.

This is a time when the air is full of discussions of every ~~kind~~ sort of social question that can be raised; ~~and~~ though the utter inadequacy of a temporary part of this debate is rooted in the fact that it so much fails to take note of this fundamental problem of human nature itself. Would it not be better, ~~men~~ people, if society and government were ordered thus and so? This kind of men and women that can be regulated in this fashion, is the vital part of this problem which does not get so seldom ~~being given~~ much consideration.

The cheerful credulity with which ~~people~~ so many devote themselves to the invention of ~~a~~ one or another new piece of social mechanism, is only equalled, I think, by the all but universal belief in political

medicine: as if there were some way to anticipate, or render superfluous those slow processes of inward growth on which all health and strength, of body and soul, must depend!

If at this present time we could look to the world's greatest teacher our question whether it is now right for a nation to go war, it would not answer it. I think, then he answered that question about the tribute money. Certain things being in the minds of men that lead to war, war is inevitable; and to dream of getting rid of it, till those causes have been in some measure eliminated from the common mind, is simply preposterous.

That was his task — to plant in the world a spirit and consciousness far from the animosities and resentments that engender strife. He proposed to reform the world by providing a kind of humanity that should be different from that which had gone before: one that should live from higher motives and for higher aims. There is no other way to reform it; and unless the spirit and character of men can somehow be transformed to a higher

likeness, all hopes of any substantial improvement in their way of living are as foolishly Utopian as the men of the world is apt to esteem them.

Our method may that nothing can be done by making better laws, for the enforcement of justice between men. But on the other hand one can easily appreciate that scorn with which the unscrupulous politician, often watches the ordinary reformer busy at his task. The thing which the politician knows, however ignorant he may be of everything else, is human nature as it actually exists; and he understands perfectly the present ineffectiveness of plans which imply that a multitude of utterly selfish minds can be induced, or constrained, to walk in the paths that altruistic sentiment may design for them.

The work of Christ begins at the real bottom and foundation of the age-long task of reshaping the world's life: with creating in the individual mind a new pattern, and a new spirit; which, as it spreads from one to another, through all ranks and classes of men, may at last

transform every warrior to a man of peace, and lift the worldly to a higher plane of heavenly life. That is the work which the Christian Church is set to continue and foster through all subsequent time; - to keep before the common mind, imagination, those ideals out of which the better humanity has its spring.

The work is slow, but it is real; while most of those speculations which in which the Church is often urged to engage, are not very genuine, and are quite likely in the end to do harm rather than good.

The whole scope of Christ's purpose must be found by asking what he wanted the individual man to be. It is not enough To ask what Christ wanted him to do. He gave certain precepts and made certain suggestions, but not for human conduct; but not in the spirit of this finite law, which aims to make hard and fast rules applicable to every circumstance and situation that might arise.

Rather on all the teachings of Jesus

designed to serve as illustrations of motives and aims that should govern men in going about their worthy work. He wanted to set before his followers a certain spirit that should dominate all their actions; and if one does not catch that spirit he may miss the whole point of the command.

"Resist not evil"! Was that in any sense a command to be obeyed as one heeds the law against murder or theft, no matter what impulse, — of cupidity or hate, may have been awakened in the mind? I do not so understand. The one great command of Christ is "love God and man." With reference to that requirement there is no such thing as assuming a virtue when one has it not.

The ideal which the follower of Christ should hold before himself is that of a mind emancipated from every kind of personal resentment, and put under the sway only of those desires which seek to heal and benefit and save. That ideal really has not much to do with the question how far, under existing circumstances, it is expedient to protect oneself from lawless or wicked aggression;

and it is not possible to make anything very consistent out of the teaching of Christ save as one reads his words in the light of that central purpose, to purge the heart of thoughts and feelings which produce and continue strife.

It is to be observed that, at the last, he did not say to his followers, if you do as I have bidden you, ye shall have peace, "He said my peace I give unto you;" as if he had imparted to them an actual achievement, or possession, which would be a power in their lives, with or without their choice.

And in fact that is what he accomplished for the whole world of men. He planted in their life an influence, that, through ever widening circles, and with an ever growing intensity, makes for peace, the only true that of honour, of charity, of mutual kindness and help; not that where, this other nobler virtues simply go to sleep, and leave men to prey upon and despoil each other, under forms of law, with rather a more pitiless severity than is common with highwaymen and thieves. Very slowly, as it may seem to us, like the dissipation of our

of these sullen storms which may sometimes lie over a wide track of country for days and weeks together, the power of that prayerful influence, which He put into the world's life, makes headway against the strife and turmoil that occasion such fearful havoc and waste.

But take the generations together and it does make steady gain: and for any part more than ~~for~~ any growth of intelligence; more than any increase in the bodily efficiency of the weapons of war; more than any commercial sum of the loss which ~~for~~ wars occasions; (though these all have their part to play). - I depend upon that mysterious leaven, which Christ somehow communicated to the life of the world, to heal at last this division and antagonism, from which the world still so much suffers.

The visitor to Japan during the recent conflict in the East found all along the coast of that country hospitals constructed and administered with the highest degree of skill yet shown in the management of such institutions of mercy. One may fairly say the grounds of these

hospitals are filled with convalescent soldiers, each one wearing the white kimono of the country and every dress having ~~has~~ sewn upon its sleeve the Christian badge of the Red Cross. How that insignia stands for something, and is not an accidental sign.

~~As~~ The Japanese are not a Christian nation, and, despite such Buddhistic training as they have received, they are not, in character, particularly merciful. Yet here was an organization grafted upon their life, whose informing spirit made one of the most perfect exhibitions of that Charity which Christ taught his disciples to exercise, that earth has ever seen. ~~seen upon earth.~~ The Red Cross society of this most worldly nation absolutely knew no difference between friend and foe, in its treatment of those who had fallen in the strife. If anything it accorded rather the more attention to the stronger dependent upon its ~~the~~ help: and it is safe to say that the memory of every Russian prisoner will be henceforth a most potent influence toward allaying the national resentment which that war has left.

It was not merely good policy which dictated this course of action; and it was not an expression of the historic character of this people that

has set for the world this very remarkable example.
Simply, with this wonderful faculty for getting hold of
the meaning of wholeness is given them to study, and
then following this instinction, they have shown us what
really lies at the heart of our christian civilization,
just as their hospitals, built on our discoveries,
have applied these principles of the healing art, as our
ancestors have not been ~~after~~ able to apply them,
in such time of need: so they have discerned
and utilized the spirit of our christian charity in
a way that really puts us to shame.

But we ought to see in this instance, if
we have clear, the beauty and flexibility and strength,
of this influence, always working at the heart of
our christian life, whose quickening and development
in the mind of our race is due to the teaching and the
example of Christ. Steadily that power has been
applied, through the ages, to curb man's warlike
passions; to breathe into man ideals, since it
could not be at once wholly subdued, the great
ideals of chivalry, that have disguised its horrors
in a mantle of poetry and romance; to bring

all members and classes of our human society into such relations that, instead of preying upon each other, they may work together for a common good.

The progress that has been made in all these ways is immense, and, at faster or slower rate it will continue through the days before us. The peace of Christ has entered into the world's life, and will grow, as surely as knowledge will increase with the progress of this great ~~as time goes on~~. Little by little, safeguards will be built against the attack of war, and by slow degrees that equally devastating strife between different ~~class~~ social and industrial classes will be reduced to narrower limits.

We who know this truth, that the Kingdoms of the earth are slowly becoming the Kingdom of our God and of his Christ, may be misled because we do not seek immediately to bring in a millennium whose foundations are not yet fully laid! But I think that no man can do more for the advancement of peace than to ~~note~~ believe that then the power of God is at work in the world, and to see to it that in the

sphere of his own life he does the things that make for peace. It is no question of telling evil how it may. It is a question, first of all, of being able to suppress, in ourselves, the wish to do harm, the desire to take vengeance upon those who have offended us; of being able to exercise endless patience with the stupidities and meannesses of poor human nature round about us, and of continuing our benefactions to those by whom they are often injured and scorned.

They who in household and office and shop, can so govern themselves as to allay strife; to disarm resentment; to turn suspicion into trust; and to establish confidence in the ideal of justice and right; and who are willing to keep this end in view, though again and again they are outraged and maligned; will do more I think for the cause of peace than can be accomplished by any other means.

And if one feels within himself any sense of duty thus to regulate his conduct,

let him know that his course is not so ~~so~~ singular, or unprecedented, as many may think. There is a mighty power working to this same purpose ~~purpose~~ outside himself; stronger very often in the heart of the common man than he himself knows; entrenching itself for wider dominion in the future than it has conquered in the past. The day must come when the better side of the life of humanity ~~and~~ shall prevail; when the spirit of Christ shall really possess the earth; and ~~they~~ but every man shall ~~shall no longer~~ "hurt or destroy;" ~~as the~~ sit under his own vine and fig tree, with none to make him afraid; ~~Lord's Holy~~ holy mountain; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.